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SUBJECT: NICARAGUA RESPONSE: NEW DELHI CONFERENCE ON AVIAN
AND PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

REF: SECSTATE 159330

¶1. (U) On November 29, we delivered REFTEL non-paper to Dr. Juan Jose Amador Velazquez, the Director General for Epidemiology at the Ministry of Health (MINSA). On November 30, we delivered the non-paper to Dr. Mario Jose Gonzalez Herrera, Chief of the Department of Epidemiology at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR). Both were appreciative of the notification about the conference and were interested in exploring the possibility of travel funded by FAO. Both Amador and Gonzalez concurred that the possible outbreak of Avian Influenza in the Western Hemisphere was a major concern and provided us with short briefings on the existing mechanisms in place at each Ministry to monitor and detect any such outbreak. Most interesting was the fact that MINSA has in place a nation-wide radio network through which the Ministry receives daily communication and health status reporting from the field. Amador also noted that MINSA has regular communications with its counterparts throughout Central America, including on the topic of Avian Influenza. Both Amador and Gonzalez indicated keen interest in having Nicaragua represented at the New Delhi Conference and determined to raise the issue immediately with their respective Ministers. (Note: Currently all foreign travel by Nicaraguan officials must be personally approved in advance by First Lady Rosario Murillo. Both Amador and Gonzalez were keen to attend, but were unsure that there was sufficient time to clear the travel request with the First Lady. END NOTE.)

¶2. (U) We also transmitted the information about the New Delhi Conference via Diplomatic Note to the Foreign Ministry on November 29, and hand delivered copies to our Health and Agriculture Ministry contacts. In addition, on November 28 talking points on the conference were discussed with Dr. Carolina Davila, the Special Assistant to Minister Gonzalez, while MINSA's coordinator for International Programs, Rosa Argentina Madriz, was sent the non-paper, the conference's program agenda and Website. Finally, we included the same information in a previously-planned letter from the Ambassador to the new Minister of Health regarding several pending issues of bilateral interest.
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